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Waterville Public Schools

21 Gilman Street
Waterville, Maine 04901-5437
Tel (207) 873-4281 — Fax (207) 872-5531
V/TTD (207) 873-0695
www wtvl k12 me us

Eric L. Haley
Superintendent of Schools

Joseph C. Mattos
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Ellen T Meader
Special Education Administrator

James E Reny
Business Manager

Letter of Appeal

December 19, 2003

FCC
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

CC Docket No. 02-6

Funding Commitment Decision to deny funding for Telecommunication Services from Service Provider Verizon of Maine

Funding Year 2003 : 07/01/2003 - 06/30/2004

Date of Funding Commitment Decision Letter · October 21, 2003

Billed Entity Name· Waterville Public School District

Billed Entity Number : 121723

Form 471 Application Number . 351827

The reason for appealing this decision to deny funding for Telecommunication Services from Service Provider Verizon of Maine is that it specified in the application process that request for basic telephone service does not require a technology plan. We have always been approved in the past for basic telephone service funding without technology plan. Have included our latest Technology Plan approved by the State of Maine as documentation in support of this appeal Also included copies of recent Verizon of Maine bills as supporting documentation to verify the amount of our request.

Please feel free to contact me for any further information you may require.

Sincerely,

James Reny
Business Manager
207-873-4281
jreny@fc.wtvl.k12 me.us

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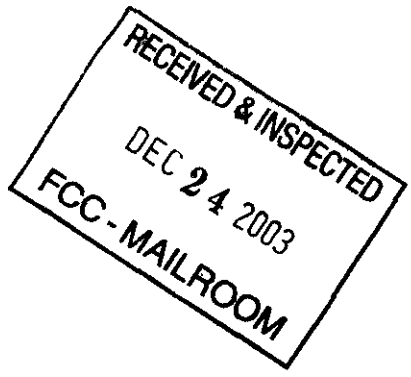

3 Year Technology Plan

Waterville Public Schools

21 Gilman St.

Waterville, ME 04901

Revised June 2002

Introduction

This document is intended to be a roadmap for the direction of our work. It is developed with input from staff, administrators, community and students. It is important to understand that it is fluid in nature and should be reassessed annually as situation and needs change.

District Technology Committee

The oversight of the technology program in Waterville Public Schools is the responsibility of the District Technology Committee. This committee is made up of a broad base of stake holders including school administrators, teachers, support staff, adult education, local colleges, city representatives, parents and other community members. Below is a list of current committee members, and their respective role;

Steve Smith, Technology Director, Committee Chair

Eric Haley, Superintendent, Committee Member

Peter Thiboutot, Jr. High School Principal, Committee Member

Peter Redmond, Hall School Teacher, Committee Member

Kert Dolloff, Mitchell School Teacher, Committee Member

Mike Quinn, Waterville Junior High School Teacher, Committee Member

Kay Grindal, Waterville Senior High School Teacher, Committee Member

Sharon Hart, Mitchell School Teacher, Committee Member

Mary Matson, Gilman St. School Teacher, Committee Member

Mary Boyle, Gifted & Talented Teacher, Committee Member

Lin Hallowell, Director of Adult Ed, Committee Member

Mike Quinn, Jr High School Teacher, Committee Member

Lee Cabana, School Board Chair, Committee Member

Steve Crate, School Board Member, Committee Member

Alan Slack, School Board Member, Committee Member

Louise Smith, Community Member, Committee Member

Chris Rhoda, Director of IS, Thomas College, Committee Member

Alan Jochem, Community member, Committee Member

Vision

Students and staff in the Waterville Public Schools will learn to integrate a variety of technology in their everyday endeavors. The need to process, manipulate, and review data in increasingly efficient ways is paramount. In relatively short periods of time, learners need to be able to make use of technology to gain timely insights, streamline routine tasks, and achieve results toward a greater purpose. Technology will be an integral part of the curriculum and learning; however, at the same time technology will become transparent to the users. Waterville Public Schools recognizes its role as a leader in integrating technology into the fabric of the community and in doing so will maintain its commitment to excellence within a safe and inviting learning environment.

Demographics

The City of Waterville encompasses 15.3 square miles and has a population of 15,605 (2000 census), a reduction of nearly 1400 from the 1990 census. The city has a Mayor-Council form of government with a full time city administrator. A council member is elected from each of the city's seven wards in partisan elections. The school department is municipally operated and governed by a seven member Board of Education elected by each ward. The population of the city of Waterville is overwhelmingly Caucasian (95.2%) with the major ethnic group being French-Canadian, English and Irish. The median family income is $25,953(2000 census), a reduction of $4,000 from the 1990 census. Taxable valuation within Waterville has dropped from $544.6 million in 1995 to $539.8 million in 2000. Waterville has more rental housing than any of its neighbors. Therefore, many of the resident population cannot or choose not to own their own home. There are 3,052 owner occupied housing units and 3,166 renter occupied units.

The city's economy is highly diversified with a mix of professional, managerial, service, and technical occupations. According to the 2000 Census Report, 2,250 people were employed in managerial and professional specialty occupations; 2016 in sales and administrative support occupations; 1,257 in service occupations; 779 in skilled labor; and 29 in farm and forestry.

There are two colleges in the city; Colby College and Thomas College. The top five employers are Maine General Hospital, Colby College, Huhtamaki, Hathaway, and Waterville Public Schools

Erate

Due to Watervılle's diverse community the district has a very large percentage of students eligible for the Free & Reduced Lunch Program. Based on the number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch the district as a whole is

eligible for a 69% ERATE reimbursement.

Current Status

Hardware, Networks & Facilities

The following is a brief summary of the infrastructure and hardware that has been installed throughout the Waterville Public School District. Attached as an appendix there is an inventory of hardware. The Waterville Public School District is made up of five buildings. The Gilman Street School houses the administrative offices as adult education and the 9-12 alternative school . The Mitchell School is made up of 8 kindergarten classrooms and 25 first, second and third grade classrooms with approximately 520 students. Albert Hall School houses all the fourth and fifth grade classrooms, totaling close to 300 students. The Junior High School, grades six, seven and eight caters to nearly 465 students. The final building, the Senior High School, holds grades nine through twelve, approximately 720 students.

The district as a whole has wide area network connecting all of the school buildings. This network was developed with the assistance of Thomas College, Maine InternetWorks (MINT) and State Cable TV (Adelphia). Coaxial cable TV lines and "cable modems" are currently used to connect all of the buildings in the district via 10MB lines. These lines also bring a fast connection to the Internet to each of the buildings. The Senior High School is connected to the Internet via an ATM connection. This bandwidth is then dispersed to each of the school buildings via the WAN. Many of the Information Services are provided out of the high school. At the high school there are multiple NT servers housing web-enabled applications, a cobalt web server, Novell enterprise backup server, squid proxy server, DNS and DHCP servers, FirstClass email server, remote dialup server and network monitoring equipment

At the Senior High School each teacher has at least one multimedia computer workstation in his or her classroom, either an iMac or a Pentium PC. There are also four labs; one with 20 G3 MACs, one with 20 Pentium PCs and two other labs with older PCs and Power Macs. The entire building is networked to a Novell Netware 4.11 file server and a 14 bay CD tower via a combination of category 5 10BaseT wiring and fiber optics. Bandwidth is switched at 100 MBS directly to each workstation. Access to the district wide email and the Internet is available over the network from each workstation.

The Junior High also has one multimedia PC in every classroom as well as a PC lab with 22 computers. Also the media center serves as an additional lab space with 10 iMacs and 10 PCs. These are also all networked to a Novell 4.11 file server, 14 bay CD tower and connected to the district email, WAN, and Internet.

The Albert Hall School has two to three Macintoshes in each classroom as well as a lab with 25 iMacs. In addition the school has one 11 station mobile/wireless computer lab. The Macs are all networked and share a Novell 4.11 file server, 14 bay CD tower and are connected to the district's WAN for email and Internet access..

The Mitchell school has three multimedia computers in each classroom. There is one computer lab with 25 multimedia Pentium class PSc. All computers are networked and share a Novell 4.11 file server, 14 bay CD tower, email and Internet access.

At the Gilman Street School, the central office staff all have new computers connected to a Novell 3.12 file server and the District's WAN, as well as to Waterville City Hall via a separate 56k leased line and a wireless connection. Adult Ed has a lab of 25 multimedia computers. Alternative Education, located in the basement of the building, has several iMac and Power Mac computers,

Software

Throughout the district MS Office version 97/98 has been accepted as the standard desktop suite. In addition to this

each school has a variety of software packages that are age and grade appropriate. Some example include, Hyperstudio, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Pagemill, Adobe PageMaker, Claris Works, various encyclopedias, Norton Anti virus, FirstClass, Netscape, CuCme, etc.. In the lower grades there are many CDs in use such as Arthur's Read Alongs, Oregon Trail and Edmark educational programs.

Competency

During the last three years, the faculty in Waterville Public Schools has continued to improve their technology proficiency. Almost without exception, the faculty reports a very high comfort level with email technologies and basic word processing. Teachers in all grades see this as a new conduit for communicating with parents and guardians. In addition to this increased communications, many teachers at the junior and senior high schools use email to assign and collect homework and other assignments. Other innovative uses of technology include the many web sites created by teachers and administrators that share student work and provide information to the community, as well as, some sites that replace traditional materials or augment textbooks and classroom presentations; skill building and drill and practice in math, language arts, and science with specialty software; and increased motivation through non-traditional use of computer technology to entice student activities in traditional curriculum. Finally, the District has taken active steps to increase teacher competencies while promoting greater understanding of the *Maine Learning Results* through a common assessment system and providing in-service technology workshops. Teachers use interactive web applications to post performance task worksheets and subject area curriculum for open review and spreadsheet templates to analyze student achievement on the common curriculum assessments.

Maintenance

The district has created a very knowledgeable and responsive technology department that maintains the systems. This department is currently made up of seven individuals, a Director, two Computer/Network Support Technicians, one Integration Specialist, and three Computer Lab Education Technicians. This team has proven to be very responsive to all the users' needs throughout the district, and has provided a great deal of support.

Learning Results

Waterville Public Schools has invested substantial resources in implementing Maine's learning Results. WPS initiatives have included involving all teachers in the developing performance based classroom assessments and in aligning system curriculum with Maine's Learning Results. A web based, relational data base system was developed to store, organize, and share this information with teachers, parents and the community. During the past 2 years, WPS has developed and implemented over forty K-12 common assessments in all content areas, which are designed to monitor and measure student's achievement. During the 2000-2001 school year, over 200,000 bits of student achievement information was analyzed by system teachers and administrators, using custom designed spreadsheet templates. These templates were designed so that all test items, which were coded to Maine's Learning Results, could be disaggregated, sorted, and analyzed in order to make valid observations about student performance.

Unfortunately, the software and system used to conduct this work is not as efficient as it needs to be, nor does it contain the necessary features and utility for analyzing and storing longitudinal data. The next phase of this project is to develop a web-based, data warehouse system for monitoring student achievement that would:

- Provide teachers with a tool for collecting and analyzing student achievement data at the classroom level. All student achievement data would be aligned with system curriculum and Maine's *Learning Results* Analysis of information would include sorting techniques to see how certain sub groups (males versus females, SES, etc.) are performing
- Provide administrators with a tool for analyzing student achievement, which allows them to aggregate student achievement information into grade level or course specific categories.
- Provide a system organizing and storing longitudinal information about student achievement.
- Provide community members with information about the performance of students in achieving Maine's *Learning Results*.

This system would provide teachers and administrators with the necessary information for making informed decisions that impact on teachers' instructional practices, programming, and in allocating school system resources. At the same time, it will provide local and state policy makers with information about the performance of students in achieving Maine's *Learning Results*.

Critical Issues

The critical issues can be categorized into three major themes/issues;

1. Development of data management system(s) that provide the staff with the tools necessary to complete the local Comprehensive Assessment System
2. Wide Area Network (WAN) upgrade
3. Development of resources necessary to maintain and support current levels of technology throughout the school district

The successful implementation of a local Comprehensive Assessment system is dependent upon the ability of the school district to provide the necessary tools to the staff. The most critical tool is a data management system that has the ability to;

- Provide teachers with a tool for collecting and analyzing student achievement data at the classroom level. All student achievement data would be aligned with system curriculum and Maine's *Learning Results*. Analysis of information would include sorting techniques to see how certain sub groups (males versus females, SES, etc.) are performing
- Provide administrators with a tool for analyzing student achievement, which allows them to aggregate student achievement information into grade level or course specific categories.
- Provide a system organizing and storing longitudinal information about student achievement.
- Provide community members with information about the performance of students in achieving Maine's *Learning Results*.

Without such a tool the collecting and analyzing of student data would be an insurmountable demand placed on the staff. In order to implement
Maine's
Learning Results the district must complete the cycle of the comprehensive assessment system.

The current infrastructure that is being used for the connectivity between school buildings though out the district is aging. The cable modems that are in use provide a 10MBS connection to all buildings, thus distributing the ATM bandwidth from the high school to all other buildings. This technology is now approximately 7 years old and is no longer supported by the manufacturer. Also, over the years we have learned that using a shared medium (e.g. physical cable plant) to provide mission critical services exposes the schools to many potential interruptions of service.

The replacement of the current Wide Area Network (WAN) technology to a more stable and faster design is a critical issue facing the school district in the next couple years.

Finally, the acquisition of necessary resources to fund the ongoing support services for technology though out the district is becoming more and more difficult. Over the past couple years, as a result of tight budgets at both the state and local levels, the technology budget for the school district has been cut substantially. In order to maintain the current level of technology resources need to be found to; maintain or increase the current level of technology staffing, provide for a 6 year replacement (turnaround) of all hardware, and allow for regular upgrades of software.

Action Plan

The action plan and time line will address the three issues identified in the "Critical Issues" section of the plan;

1. Development of data management system(s) that provide the staff with the tools necessary to complete the local Comprehensive Assessment System
2. Wide Area Network (WAN) upgrade
3. Development of resources necessary to maintain and support current levels of technology throughout the school district

Action Step 1: (Expected completion date January 2004)

In order to address the need to develop a data management system Waterville Public Schools has entered into an agreement with the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) that will allow the sharing of time of the technology director to assist the MDOE in building such a system. MDOE has initiated the implementation of a new system known as Maine Education Data Management System (MEDMS) through the formation of the Data Integration Management Project (DIMP) team under the direction of Judy Lucarrelli, Deputy Commissioner. MDOE has agreed to contract with Waterville Public Schools to purchase 50% of the Waterville Technology Director's time to assist with this project.

By partnering with MDOE Waterville Public Schools will be an active partner in the development of the state wide assessment data management system that will enable all schools throughout the state to capture and then analyze student achievement data across content areas, content standard, performance indicators, various assessments and over time. This tool will be able to;

- Provide teachers with a tool for collecting and analyzing student achievement data at the classroom level. All student achievement data would be aligned with system curriculum and Maine's *Learning Results*. Analysis of information would include sorting techniques to see how certain sub groups (males versus females, SES, etc.) are performing
- Provide administrators with a tool for analyzing student achievement, which allows them to aggregate student achievement information into grade level or course specific categories.
- Provide a system organizing and storing longitudinal information about student achievement.
- Provide community members with information about the performance of students in achieving Maine's *Learning Results*.

The MEDMS is expected to go live before the start of the 2003-04 school year in order to meet the graduation requirements for the class of 2007. The Waterville Technology Director began sharing his time with MDOE in March of 2002 and expects to continue this arrangement until at least December of 2003.

Action step 2: (Expected completion date July 2004)

The work to upgrade of the Waterville Public School wide area network has already begun. A technology consulting firm has been hired to design a fiber WAN that will provide a Gigabit backbone between all the school buildings. The initial plan or design is expected to be completed by July 1, 2002.

With this plan Waterville Public Schools expect to develop a "Request for Proposal" that can be distributed within the federal ERATE window for funding in the school year of July 2003-04. This ERATE window would be sometime in the fall of 2002.

In order for the new WAN to be covered under the federal ERATE program the lines and hardware will have to be leased from a provider as opposed to an outright purchase. This will be clearly outlined in the RFP process.

Once a new WAN is in place that provides Gigabit speed between buildings all of the existing equipment throughout the school buildings will be centralized into one location. This will further enhance the services that the technology staff can provide.

Action step 3: (Expected completion date - ongoing)

The development of resources to continue supporting the level of investment in technology that Waterville Schools are used to is not quite as easy to define. Through an ongoing effort of cooperation with city officials Waterville Public Schools will attempt to secure ongoing support and funding for technology initiatives from the city.

In addition Waterville Public Schools will seek all possible avenues for technology finding including, but not limited to state grants, federal grants, donations, and alumni gifts.

Currently Waterville Public Schools' technology budget is approximately 2.3% of the total budget. In order to meet the requirements of the technology plan the technology budget should be closer to 3% of the entire budget. This will be the target figure for funding in the 2003-04 school year when essential programs and services funding formulas are expected to lay a larger role in general assistance funding determination.

Continuing Evaluation

Currently, and for the past two years, there has been in place a technology committee consisting of the Assistant Superintendent, the Director of Technology , administrators from each of the five schools, other selected staff, a representative from both Thomas and Colby Colleges, the City of Waterville's Information Services department and technology professionals and parents from the community. This committee is charged with overseeing the introduction and use of technology in the Waterville Public Schools. This is the group that sets the goals, standards and technology plan for the district. It will also be the duty of this committee to review the technology plan and assess the district's status.

This committee will not only evaluate the progress of the school district's achievement of this plan but also whether the plan itself is meeting the goals set out in the vision. This evaluation of the technology plan will occur, at a minimum, annually. The evaluation will result in a written report to be filed with the committee's minutes. This report will include not only the assessment of what initiatives have been met, but also any rewrites to the technology plan. The technology plan is expected to be an evolving document as technology itself is a rapidly evolving field.

Conclusion

Waterville Public School's 3 year technology plan is based on our technology curriculum in conjunction with the State of Maine *Learning Results*. It is our intent that the established benchmarks as cited in the Waterville technology curriculum will be met or exceeded as a result of this plan. As technology becomes more and more a part of everyday life it will also become a transparent yet critical component of the school environment.